

Day 28

Do Your Job!

Matthew 5:7 (NLT) God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

We have been learning the very things that make a blessed life. God in His amazing grace let's us in on Kingdom life and Kingdom rewards. If we do what He tells us, we not only end up in the right place for eternity, but we also reap the rich rewards of what Jesus says is a life that is blessed. **This counter cultural revolution was started by Jesus and will never end** because it is what God desires for us. It is the way His Kingdom operates and it's the way He wants us to operate. **We choose whether we are going to function His way, the way of the cross. It is not the way of self-discovery and self-fulfillment. It's the way of God's discovery and self-sacrifice, the Jesus way.** God's way starts with Him, continues through Him and ends with Him. He is called the "Alpha and the Omega." Our faith starts with Jesus and is completed in Jesus. So, as Christ followers, there are clear expectations. These expectations are not muddled, confusing or ambivalent. **They become the latter, when we use human reasoning as the only method of measure and comprehension.**

Jesus, in His sermon, tells us that God blesses the merciful; that the merciful will receive and be shown the same mercy they give others. We have learned that this mercy is not human compassion or human kindness. This mercy is God's mercy that has to be received and then it has to be distributed. We, as Christ followers, must all become distributors of God's mercy. **We are not the Supplier, we are not even the Manufacturer; we are simply God's Amazon that ships mercy to whoever needs it.** We receive mercy from Him and then we dispense that mercy to others. Mercy distributing is our business; mercy distributing is our job!

Some jobs are harder than others. Some jobs are tougher than others. Some jobs are dirtier than others. Some jobs are seasonal, and some jobs take longer than others. Some jobs require multiple people, and some jobs require a few. What all jobs have in common is that someone needs to do it. (I know profound, right?) If we do our jobs, we get paid, so that we can live. At any job, there is what we would term "minimal expectation"; like showing up, showing up on time, doing what is expected, and carrying out the instructions of those over us. When we meet the expectations, we get a paycheck. We work and we get paid. I don't know of any job where, if you simply show up, you get a standing ovation as you come in and a standing ovation as you leave and lots of extra money. (Maybe at a millennial workplace)

Bonuses and raises come when we do more than the minimum, meet more than the expectations; not when we have showed up for six months and simply did our jobs. If you are thinking, "What has this got to do with mercy?", then please give me some mercy and just humor me for a moment. What are we supposed to do as Christ followers? **In the simplest terms, we are to love God and love people.** For most of us we think of these two concepts as two different things, but not for God. To love God is to love people, and we show our love for God in the way we treat others. You cannot hate people and love God. According to John the apostle, that makes you a liar. ***"If anyone boasts, 'I love God,' and goes right on hating his brother or sister, thinking nothing of it, he is a liar. If he won't love the person he can see, how can he love the God he can't see? The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You've got to love both."* (1 John 4:20-21 MSG)**

To love God is to obey Him. ***"If you love me, obey my commandments."* (John 14:15 NLT)** So we, as Christ followers, have received a job. **What is our job? Our job is to give mercy to others. We give mercy to our brothers and sisters. We give mercy to our enemies. Giving mercy is what is expected of**

us, like showing up for a job. If we do our job, we get paid. How do we get paid? We get paid in what we need the most so that we might live eternally. What do we need the most? We all need mercy! Do you want to get paid? Then do your job!

This is not a suggestion from Jesus but a command. Jesus says this in Luke 17: *“One day Jesus said to his disciples, ‘There will always be temptations to sin, but what sorrow awaits the person who does the tempting! 2 It would be better to be thrown into the sea with a millstone hung around your neck than to cause one of these little ones to fall into sin. 3 So watch yourselves! If another believer sins, rebuke that person; then if there is repentance, forgive. 4 Even if that person wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, you must forgive.’” Luke 17:1-4 (NLT)*

Jesus warns us not to be the cause for others to stumble. Then He shows us what our response needs to be when someone sins against us; especially when they commit the same sin over and over again. The reaction to what Jesus just said is a lesson for all of us because the apostles immediately ask Jesus to do something for them. *“The apostles said to the Lord, ‘Show us how to increase our faith.’” Luke 17:5 (NLT)* They immediately think, “Boy, this is going to require a whole lot of faith.” Someone messes with me and then they say, “I am sorry. Please forgive me. I won’t do it again,” then they proceed to do it again and continue the same pattern. They sin against you, they say they are sorry, you forgive. No wonder they said we are going to need some faith here. But watch how Jesus responds to their request for more faith.

“The Lord answered, ‘If you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘May you be uprooted and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you!’ 7 When a servant comes in from plowing or taking care of sheep, does his master say, ‘Come in and eat with me’? 8 No, he says, ‘Prepare my meal, put on your apron, and serve me while I eat. Then you can eat later.’ 9 And does the master thank the servant for doing what he was told to do? Of course not. 10 In the same way, when you obey me you should say, ‘We are unworthy servants who have simply done our duty.’” Luke 17:6-10 (NLT)

Remember the context of what Jesus is communicating to His disciples. He is not encouraging them to start a tree removal business with their faith. He is not saying your faith can change the landscape if you just had a small mustard seed kind of faith. The context is: sin, temptation, offenses and forgiveness. The apostles asked for more faith to be able to forgive someone over and over for the same sin. **So Jesus says, “You don’t need more faith, you simply need to obey.” In simpler terms, do your job.** Then Jesus says this: “If part of someone’s job is to work outside plowing the field or watching the sheep and preparing meals for the employer, if that person comes in after they worked outside, the boss is not going to say, ‘Sit down and eat with me.’ He is going to say, ‘Finish your job and then you can sit down and eat.’” Why? Because that is your job; that’s what you were hired to do.

According to Jesus, to forgive and to give mercy to someone else, is not something that requires greater faith, it is something that requires greater obedience. Because the person who forgives is simply doing their duty in the same way a person would do their job. Jesus says, “To give mercy is what I expect of you. You don’t get a special thank you or a note or extra pat on the back, or a check in the mail. **It simply means, you know that you have received undeserved mercy from Me, and you are simply passing that on to others. Because that’s what My children do, they do their jobs!”**

We do our job so that we can get paid. When we give mercy to others, we are simply obeying what we are supposed to do. Then we get paid in mercy. **If you don’t need mercy, by all means don’t do your**

job. But if you need mercy, the only way to receive mercy is to give it! When we give someone mercy, it does not mean we approve of what they have done or what they are doing. There is a big difference between love and approval. We can give someone mercy even if we do not agree or approve of their actions. Jesus does that for us. **When we mess up, He does what He did with the woman that was caught in adultery. He didn't condemn her. He didn't condone her sin. He didn't minimize the wrong or approve her actions. It wasn't right for her to cheat on her spouse and commit adultery, but He gave her mercy and His mercy changed her.** We are Christ's distributors of mercy to all we meet. Mercy comes to us, so that mercy can flow through us. How good are you at your job of distributing mercy? We have received mercy freely; we are expected to give it freely. The cost of mercy was paid for by the Blood of Jesus on the cross. ***"But anyone who asks for mercy from the Lord shall have it and shall be saved."* (Acts 2:21 TLB)** He offered it to us and then He employed us to dispense it wherever and to whomever we come in contact with.

You can either love what you do or hate what you do; that is up to you. **Those who love being dispensers of God's mercy are like the woman who anointed Jesus' feet, washed it with her tears, wiped it with her hair and smothered them with her kisses.** Simon the Pharisees invited Jesus to his house for dinner, yet Simon gave Jesus no attention; not even doing the minimum; such as, water to wash His feet. Simon did not even greet Jesus with a kiss or, as custom was, anoint His head as a sign of welcoming Him. Simon scorned the sight of this woman, who everybody knew, was dancing at the local club, and was repulsed that Jesus would let her touch Him. He invited Jesus, yet, seemed indifferent towards Jesus. This woman came prepared, and did everything that was needed, to welcome Jesus as the special guest in that house. So Jesus tells a story of a man who loaned two people two different amounts of money; one 500 and one 50. Neither could repay him. So, in his kindness, he forgave both. Then Jesus asked Simon: "Who do you think loved him more after that?" Simon answered, "Supposedly the one who owed the greater debt." Then Jesus says this: ***"You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume. 47 I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love."*** **48 Then Jesus said to the woman, 'Your sins are forgiven.'"** **Luke 7:46-48(NLT)**

Do you love the job that Jesus gave you? It all depends on how much mercy you think you have received. Let's get good at our jobs, not for praise or extra pats on the back, but simply because we have been forgiven so much and we love Jesus so much. So go into this dog-eat-dog world, do your job, do it well, and distribute His mercy to everyone you meet, especially to those who deserve it the least.

Reflection and Prayer:

- Make a decision to wear the clothes that Jesus picked for you: tenderhearted mercy. How much of an allowance do you make for other people's faults? What would the people in your life say about your answer? ***"Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. 13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."* (Colossians 3:12-13 NLT)**
- How can we show mercy to someone who is wavering in their faith? Will you reach out to someone you know is struggling? Balancing mercy and truth is crucial to help people to be set free from sinful behavior. Think of it like a surgery. Mercy is the anesthesia and truth is the scalpel; both of these must be used with precision and wisdom to accomplish what needs to be done. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you in your approach to others and to give you the wisdom to be truthful and merciful. ***"And***

you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. 23 Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment. Show mercy to still others, but do so with great caution, hating the sins that contaminate their lives.” (Jude 1:22-23 NLT)

- Pray for people in your sphere of influence that have not experienced God’s mercy. Then let the Lord use you to show them what true mercy looks like. The world is in a desperate need of God’s mercy and you must dispense it! Accept your call to duty. *“Later when Jesus was eating supper at Matthew’s house with his close followers, **a lot of disreputable characters came and joined them.** When the Pharisees saw him keeping this kind of company, they had a fit, and lit into Jesus’ followers. ‘What kind of example is this from your Teacher, acting cozy with crooks and riff raff?’ 12-13Jesus, overhearing, shot back, ‘**Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? Go figure out what this Scripture means: “I’m after mercy, not religion.” I’m here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders.”**” (Matthew 9:11-13 MSG)*
- ***Psalm 86:5 (NLT)*** *“O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help.”*